

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ECONOMY
OF THE
SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA

by
Ross W. Hammond
and
Wallace B. Bishop, Jr.

Industrial Development Division
Engineering Experiment Station
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
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INTRODUCTION

The 13-county Southwest Georgia Area features a strong agricultural base and a burgeoning manufacturing complex. With the decline of agricultural employment (although agricultural production remains high), the employment emphasis will shift to manufacturing during this decade.

A number of problems and opportunities are highlighted in the analyses reflected in this report on the counties currently represented in the Southwest Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission. These counties include Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, and Worth.

This study analyzes area trends and the present employment structure and reviews other highlights of the economy of the area. Its main purpose is to provide perspective for more detailed studies and for the establishment of active development goals and efforts.

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA

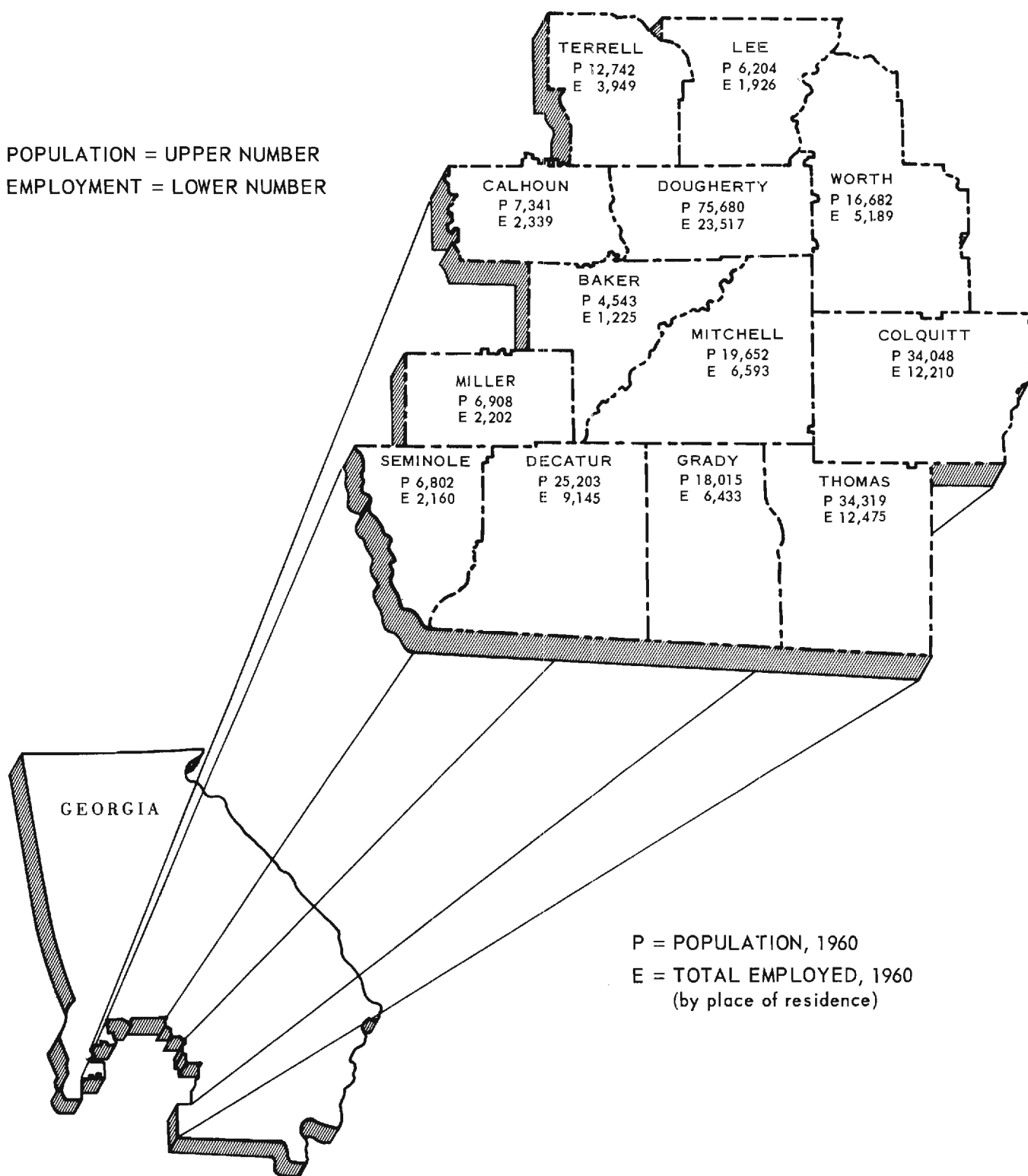
Map 1 (on the facing page) focuses on 13 Georgia counties which have organized the Southwest Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission. It shows the 1960 population and resident employment in each county, totaling 268,139 and 89,363, respectively, for the 13-county area.

The 13 counties grouped in the Southwest Georgia Area include Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, and Worth.

MAP 1

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA, 1960

POPULATION = UPPER NUMBER
EMPLOYMENT = LOWER NUMBER



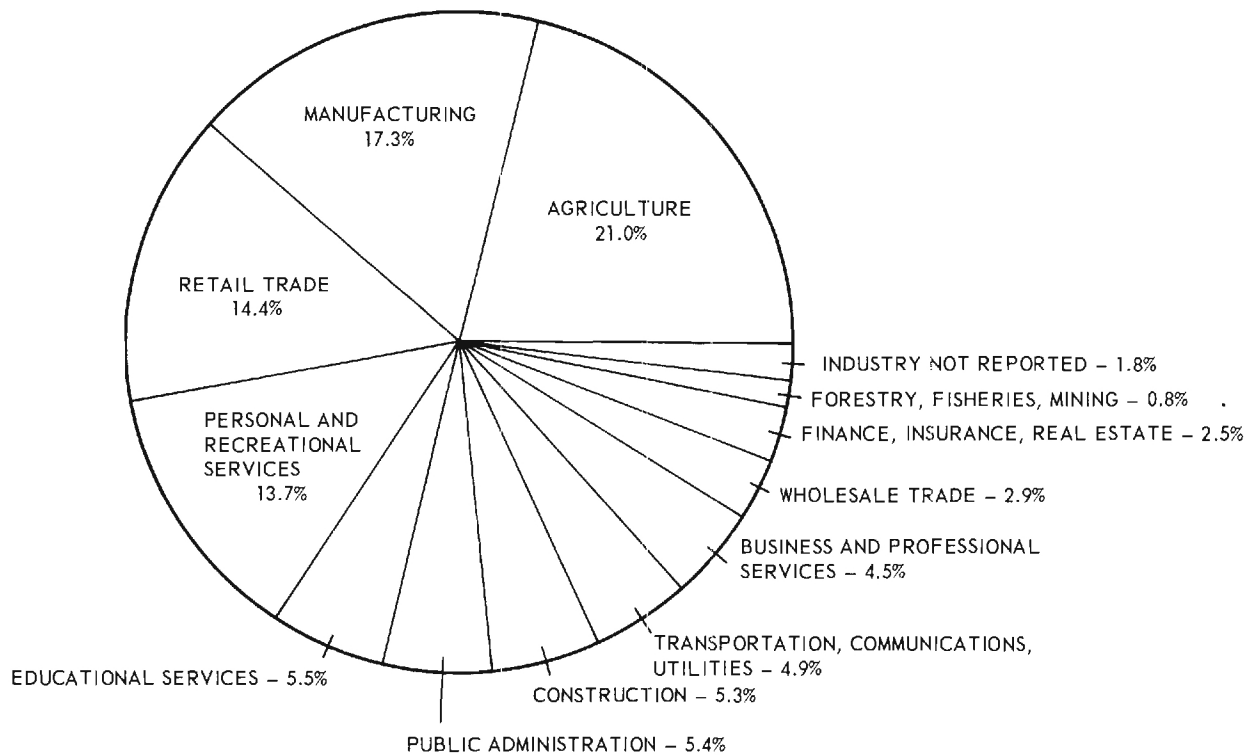
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA

Chart 1 shows the percentage distribution by industry of all resident employment in the 13-county area. The leading sector in 1960 was agriculture, which employed 18,760 workers, as compared with 15,417 in manufacturing, 12,901 in retail trade, and 12,275 in personal and recreational services.^{1/} These four categories, combined, accounted for 66.4% of the total resident employment.

Sectors of intermediate importance include educational services (4,914), public administration (4,810), and construction (4,708). The combination of these seven leading sectors represents 82.6% of the area's total employment in 1960.

^{1/} "Personal and recreational services" comprise repair services; services in private households, hotels, and motels; laundry and dry cleaning services; and entertainment and recreation services. "Business and professional services" include advertising, accounting, auditing, and bookkeeping services; welfare, religious, and nonprofit membership organizations; hospitals; and other professional and related services (except educational).

CHART 1
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE
SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA, 1960



SOURCE: U. S. CENSUS OF POPULATION

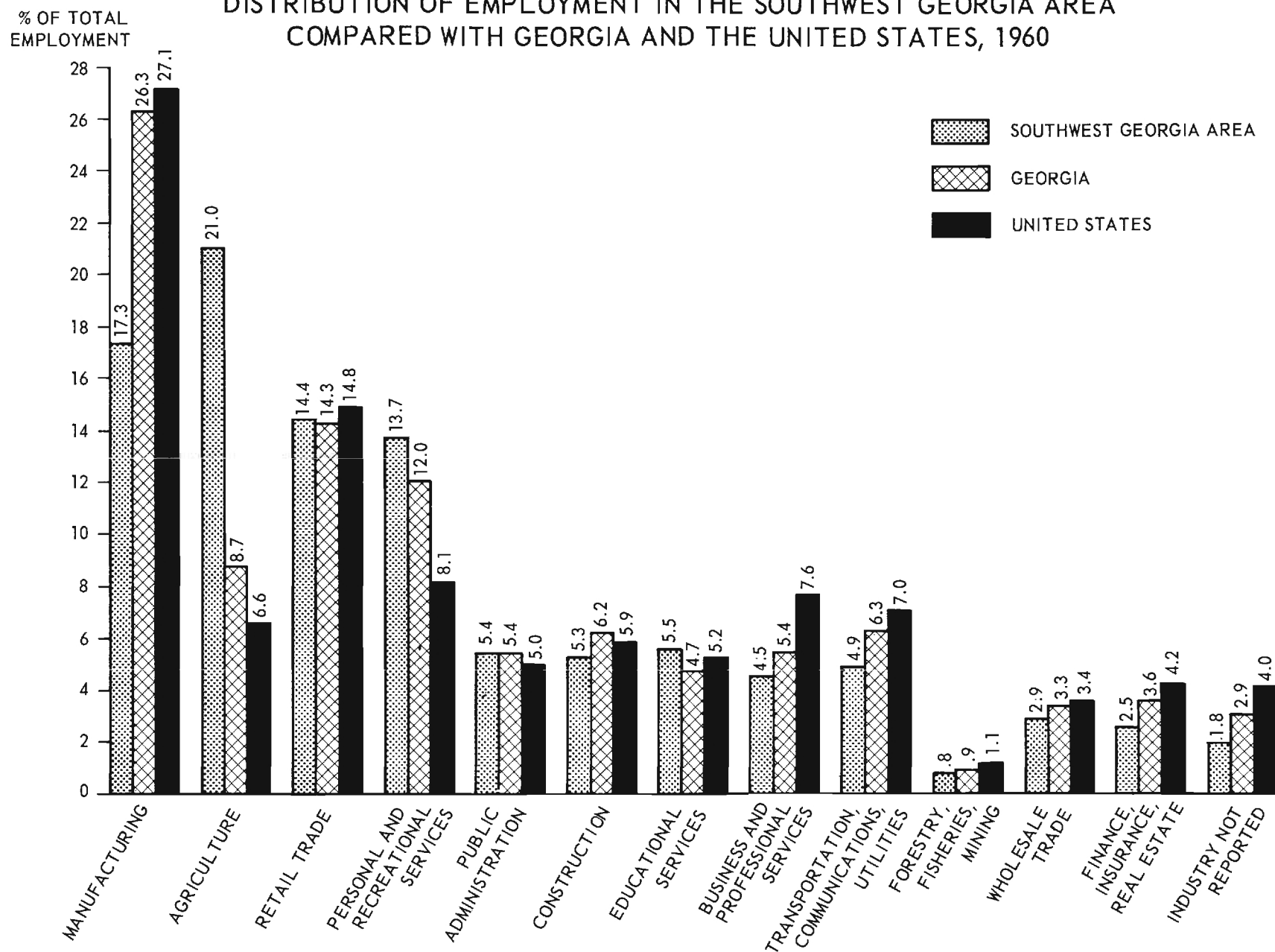
COMPARATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE
SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA, GEORGIA, AND THE UNITED STATES

Chart 2 compares the employment mix in the 13-county area with that in Georgia and the United States as a whole.

The most noticeable variance is in agriculture. Although there was an approximate 50% loss in farm jobs between 1950 and 1960, the Southwest Georgia Area still has a far higher proportion of agricultural employees than the state or the nation. Employment in personal and recreational services and educational services shows higher proportions in the area than in either Georgia or the United States. The percentage employed in retail trade is higher than Georgia's but less than the nation's; public administration employment proportions are the same in the area and in Georgia, both being greater than that for the United States as a whole. Although manufacturing provides a large number of jobs, it employs a smaller percentage of the total work force in the area than in the state and the nation.

CHART 2

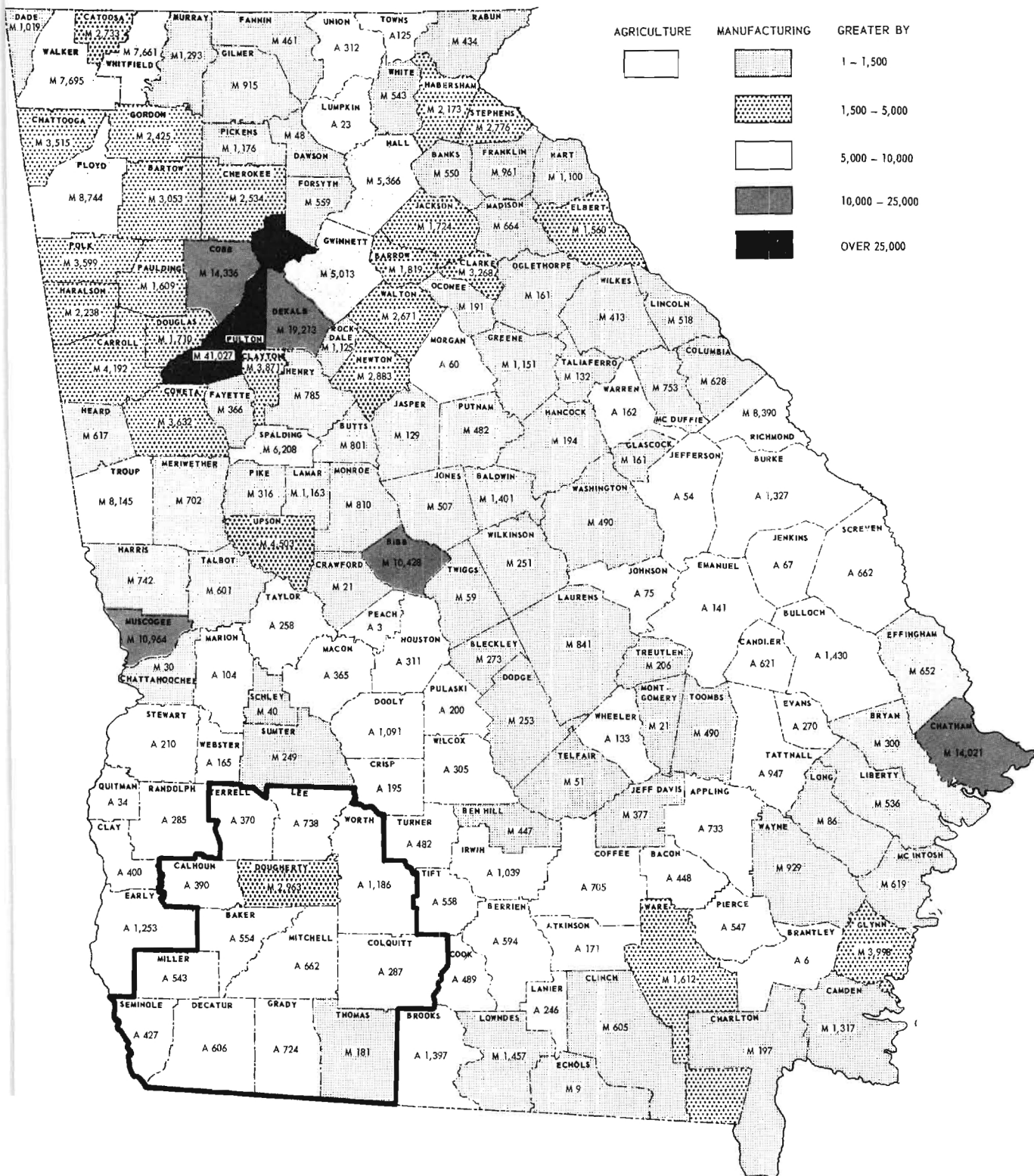
DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA COMPARED WITH GEORGIA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1960



AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT
IN GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA

Map 2 compares agricultural and manufacturing employment by county in Georgia, by place of residence. Manufacturing leads agriculture in 104 of the state's 159 counties. Within the local area under study, manufacturing employment is greater in only two of the counties and trails agriculture in the other 11 counties. Counties in which manufacturing jobs predominate are Thomas (181) and Dougherty (2,963). Agriculture leads by 287 in Colquitt and 1,186 in Worth, the counties with the smallest and largest margins of difference, respectively. In the other nine counties, the agricultural employment lead ranges from 370 to 738 persons.

MAP 2 PREDOMINANCE OF MANUFACTURING OR AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEES, 1960 (by place of residence)



DISTRIBUTION OF MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Table 1 compares the distribution of manufacturing employment in the Southwest Georgia Area with the all-Georgia and national distributions.

Of the 15,417 residents of the Southwest Georgia Area employed in manufacturing as of 1960, about 73% were in nondurable goods manufacture. This is somewhat higher than the all-Georgia percentage (66.4) and it far exceeds the national average (43.9%).

Leading industry groups in the study area include food and kindred products (29.6% of total manufacturing employment), furniture, lumber, and wood products (16.6%), textiles (16.2%), apparel (13.1%), and chemicals and allied products (7.7%). All but textiles are more prominent in the study area's pattern than in the all-Georgia and national patterns. The textiles percentage is below the Georgia figure but considerably higher than that of the U. S.

The Southwest Georgia Area contains one of the state's 40 leading manufacturing employment counties. Dougherty, with 3,756 residents employed in manufacturing, ranks 22nd. Each of the remaining counties, except Thomas (2,434) and Colquitt (2,420), had fewer than 1,600 residents employed in manufacturing in 1960.

The 13-county area has 45 factories employing 100 or more persons, with 14 of these employing 250 or more persons. These are distributed among towns and cities in the area -- Albany, Attapulgus, Bainbridge, Cairo, Camilla, Dawson, Edison, Leesburg, Moultrie, Poulan, Sylvester, and Thomasville.

The largest plant, from the point of view of employment, is the Coats and Clark plant at Albany, with over 500 employees. Recent major announcements include an expansion of 300 employees at the Brunswick Corporation plant in Albany and the new plant, employing 375, of Aluminum Products, Inc., in Moultrie.

Table 1
 DISTRIBUTION OF MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
 IN THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA, GEORGIA, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1960
 (By place of residence)

<u>Manufacturing Category</u>	<u>Southwest Georgia Area</u>		<u>State of Georgia</u>	<u>United States</u>
	<u>(No.)</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>(%)</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Manufacturing, total	15,417	100.0	100.0	100.0
Durable goods:	4,157	27.0	33.6	56.1
Furniture, lumber, and wood products	2,562	16.6	12.5	6.1
Primary metals	108	.7	1.5	7.0
Fabricated metals	248	1.6	2.6	7.4
Machinery, nonelectrical	505	3.6	2.8	8.9
Electrical machinery	57	.4	2.0	8.5
Motor vehicles and equipment	59	.4	3.2	4.8
Transportation equipment, except motor vehicles	191	1.2	4.3	5.6
Other durable goods	382	2.5	4.7	7.8
Nondurable goods:	11,260	73.0	66.4	43.9
Food and kindred products	4,561	29.6	12.2	10.4
Textiles	2,492	16.2	26.0	5.5
Apparel	2,019	13.1	12.9	6.6
Printing and publishing	578	3.8	3.9	6.5
Chemicals and allied products	1,191	7.7	3.8	4.9
Other nondurable goods	419	2.7	7.6	10.0

Source: U. S. Census of Population

Major products or product classification of the 13-county area's largest manufacturing employers are listed below.

<u>Industry Group</u>	<u>Product(s) or Product Classification</u>
Food Products	Candy, feeds, meat curing and processing, manufactured ice, poultry processing, and peanut butter.
Wood Products	Wirebound boxes, building materials, and hardwood lumber.
Textile Mill Products	Carpets, cotton sheeting, and cotton thread.
Apparel	Infants' wear, ladies' undergarments, work clothes, shirts, trousers, and ladies' sportswear.
Chemicals and Allied Products	Fertilizer, sulfuric acid, sodium silicofluoride.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Chart 3 shows employment by industry in the 13-county area for 1950 and 1960. Each sector except agriculture, forestry, and wholesale trade has gained since 1950, both relatively and in absolute terms. Agriculture now accounts for 21% of the area's total employment -- down sharply from 39.3% only 10 years earlier.

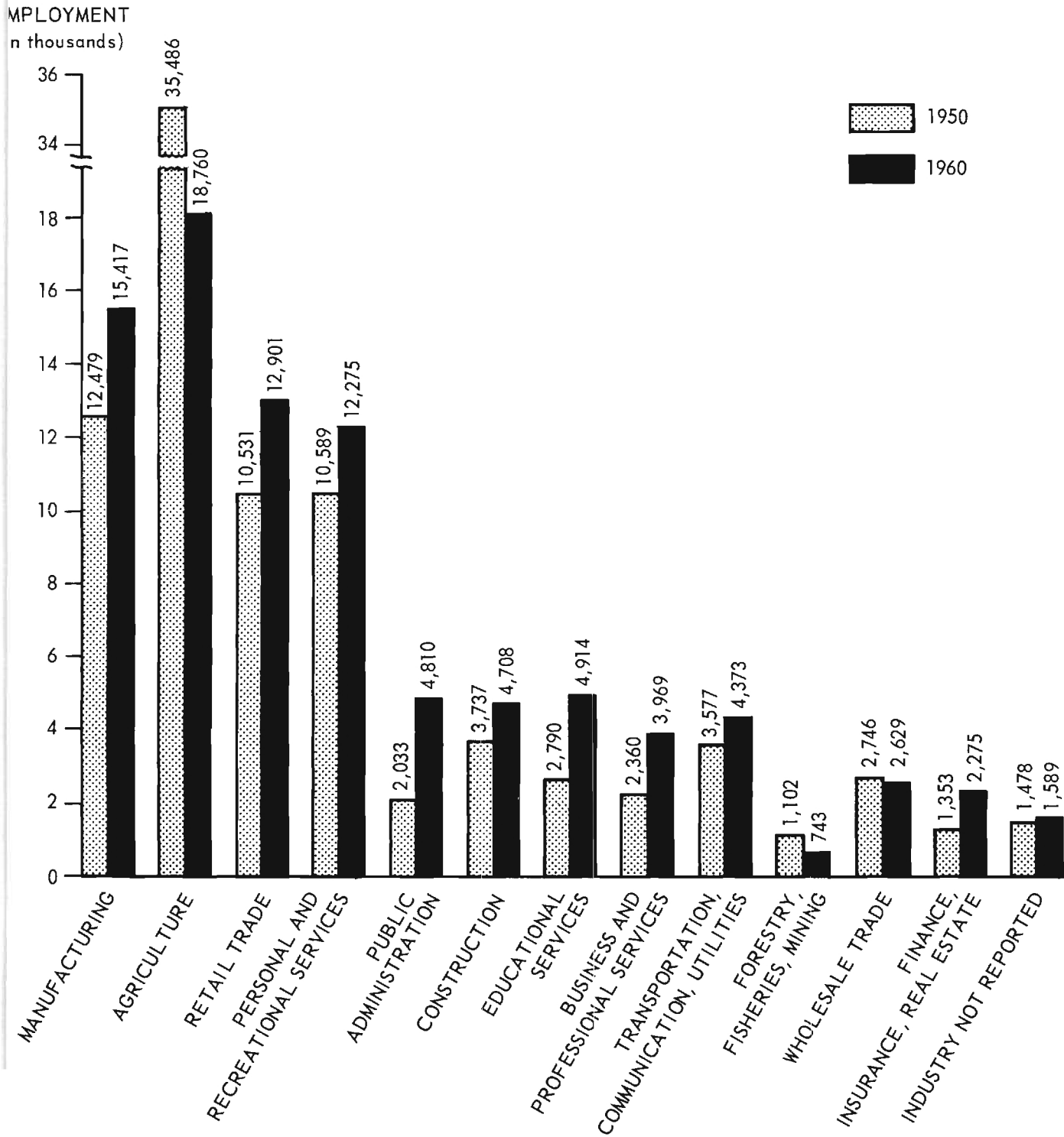
The Southwest Georgia Area had a net loss of 898 jobs from 1950 to 1960. Its percentage loss of 1.0% contrasts with over-all gains of 10.4% for all of Georgia and 14.5% for the country as a whole. The area's net loss was due primarily to the fact that it lost 16,726 agricultural jobs. This represented a percentage decline of approximately 47%, as compared with all-Georgia and national declines of about 55% and 38%, respectively. Other activities which showed net decreases, totaling 476 persons, were forestry, fisheries, mining, and wholesale trade.

The area's job growth rates in many economic sectors were superior to both national and Georgia rates between 1950 and 1960. These include construction; transportation, communications, and utilities; retail trade; finance, insurance and real estate; business and professional services; educational services; and public administration. The area's percentage increase in manufacturing jobs was higher than the national average but slightly below the state's rate of growth. These favorable percentage gains were made on comparatively weak 1950 bases. Nevertheless, all of this growth brought more balance to the area employment structure.

Absolute job gains from 1950 to 1960 were greatest in manufacturing. The area also had substantial numerical increases in public administration, retail trade, and education employment. Absolute changes by sector from 1950 to 1960 are shown on the following page.

<u>Total net change (loss)</u>	<u>-898</u>
Manufacturing	2,938
Public administration	2,777
Retail trade	2,370
Educational services	2,124
Personal and recreational services	1,686
Business and professional services	1,609
Construction	971
Finance, insurance, real estate	922
Transportation, communications, utilities	796
Miscellaneous (industry not reported)	111
Wholesale trade	-117
Forestry, fisheries, mining	-359
Agriculture	-16,726

CHART 3
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA AREA,
1950 AND 1960



A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES CONFRONTING SOUTHWEST GEORGIA

Problems

Data from the 1960 Census of Population and other recent censuses indicate that the 13-county Southwest Georgia Area is a low-income, thinly populated section of Georgia. The area represents more than 9% of the state's land area, but has less than 7% of its residents and only 5.1% of Georgia's total income. Only one county -- Dougherty -- has a median family income (\$4,401) greater than the state median of \$4,208. The other 12 counties fall below the state median. Median family income is lowest in Baker County, where it is only 40% of the state figure.

The area's shares of total land area, farm jobs, and number of farms are higher than its portions of the state's population, housing units, factories, and trade and service establishments. This highlights the still preponderant role of agriculture in the area, despite the drop in farm jobs during the 1950-1960 decade from 39.3% to 21.0% of the employed population.

Compared with its share of Georgia's residents, the area is deficient in total jobs, manufacturing jobs, bank deposits, retail and wholesale sales, and sound housing units.

The area's economy has experienced profound changes in recent years. Between 1950 and 1960 there was an over-all gain in population of 19,713 persons, with four counties gaining and seven declining in population. However, the number of employed declined in the same period by 898 persons.

These figures show only the net result of major shifts in population during the decade. The loss of farm jobs caused thousands of people to leave the rural areas to seek work elsewhere. When allowance is made for the natural increase (total births less total deaths) in the ten years between 1950 and 1960, every county but Dougherty showed heavy out-migration of the civilian population. Over 50,000 people left the 12 counties during this period; although Dougherty County attracted some 12,000, the remainder left the area altogether.

Analysis of the net increase in population by age groups emphasizes the loss of workers:

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>Change 1950-60</u>
Under 18 years	99,535	113,182	13,647
18 - 64 years	132,637	134,679	2,042
65 and over	<u>16,254</u>	<u>20,278</u>	<u>4,024</u>
	248,426	268,139	19,713

Since the increase in the 18-64 age group would include most, if not all, of the increase of some 4,400 in the armed forces in the area, this leaves an actual decrease in the population from which the majority of the labor force is drawn.

The civilian labor force in 1960, however, shows an increase of 791 persons, compared with 1950. This increase was achieved by the growing number of women seeking employment, offsetting an actual decline in the male work force. In 1960 women formed 36.5% of the civilian labor force, compared with only 29.5% in 1950.

Unemployment was higher in 1960, however, for both men and women, causing a net decline in total employment from the 1950 level.

Six counties are eligible for Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA) benefits -- Baker, Calhoun, Dougherty, Lee, Terrell, and Worth. Three other counties -- Mitchell, Colquitt, and Decatur -- are eligible for assistance under the Public Works Acceleration Act, Public Law 87-658.

Dougherty County attracts commuters from all the surrounding counties. Nearly 29% of Lee County and over 16% of Worth County workers commute across county lines. Further south, Decatur and Thomas counties provide jobs for some workers from adjacent counties.

In 1960 agricultural workers outnumbered manufacturing workers in all but two counties -- Dougherty and Thomas. Trends of the 1950-1960 decade indicate that manufacturing jobs will overtake the area agricultural jobs by the end of 1964. Further shifts from agricultural employment are to be expected, but at a reduced rate. However, farm production is high, livestock production is increasing, and agricultural activity will remain a vital factor in the area in the foreseeable future.

While there is considerable diversity to the area's resident manufacturing activity, much of it is related to seasonal, low-wage industry. Food and kindred products, furniture, lumber and wood products, and textiles and apparel accounted for more than 75% of the manufacturing employment in 1960. The nationwide outlook for future employment in apparel, wood products, textiles, and food products compares unfavorably with total manufacturing, according to forecasts by the National Planning Association. Recent announcements in the metalworking fields, as well as significant chemicals and allied products activities, however, are encouraging signs that the area's manufacturing base is broadening.

While Albany and Dougherty County, as the trade center of Southwest Georgia, dominate the economy of the 13-county area, this dominance is not as pronounced as in some other areas of Georgia. This is because Albany and Dougherty County constitute the smallest standard metropolitan area in Georgia and there are other major communities in the area. The latter include Thomasville (18,240), Moultrie (15,760), and Bainbridge (12,700).

Inter-area competition for business and industry can be expected to continue and intensify in the years ahead. The increasing importance of technical skills and basic aptitudes for training will have a crucial bearing on the area's ability to compete successfully for many types of industry. The area is fortunate to have three vocational-technical training schools, located at Albany, Moultrie, and Thomasville. Comparisons based on the educational status of residents 25 years old and over show that 12 of the 13 counties fall below the state's average in median number of school years completed. There is a need for the development of institutions of higher learning and a continuous upgrading of all educational facilities.

Opportunities

Development of "Strength" Industries. Industries which have potential based on existing area agriculture and forest resources should be investigated for further development. Such industry potentials include commercial feed lots, meat packing, food processing, frozen foods, and timber processing into finished goods such as wooden pallets, yard toys, and hardboard. When investigation and research have revealed the feasibility of specific industries, these opportunities should be brought to the attention of interested area people and

to prospective concerns outside the area. A continuous effort is needed to identify and manufacture new products which can be made from existing area raw materials. There is also a need to develop such industrial services as machine shops, foundries, and plating, anodizing, and metal treating plants.

Development of "Footloose" Industries. Existing area industry already is largely oriented to agricultural and forest resources (e.g., food processing, furniture, lumber and wood products, textiles, and apparel). There is a continuing need for more diversified industry. Products which have a high value and low weight, such as electronic devices, small appliances, optics, cameras, and light machinery, should be sought (though these demand a higher type of technical skill than the area labor now possesses). These are called "footloose industries" since they can locate almost anywhere because freight rates to the markets are a relatively small part of the cost of selling the products. These "footloose" companies can help greatly in diversifying the present industrial base. In addition, this type of industry is a large employer of male labor, which is needed in the area to balance present industry, which hires predominantly female labor.

Development of River and Port Potentials. Of vital importance to Southwest Georgia is further development of the river and port potentials of the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers. Expansion of the port facilities at Bainbridge and the construction of port facilities at Albany in conjunction with navigation on the Flint to that city would greatly enhance the attractiveness of the area as a distribution and wholesale center. It would also improve prospects for obtaining many industries using large volumes of high-density raw materials.

Development of Tourist and Recreational Potentials. The dollar income which can be produced by tourism is appreciable. Southwest Georgia has lagged in the development of this industry because of its geographical location, the relative lack of scenic attractions, and ineffective promotion of its attractions.

While tourism may never become a major industry throughout the area, much can be achieved through a planned program of development of attractions such as the rivers and lakes, plantations, and other points of interest. A promotional campaign of some magnitude, together with economic development of scenic attractions, tourist facilities, and good restaurants, will be needed.

Recreational facilities center mainly around Lake Seminole, in Seminole and Decatur counties, and the rivers of the area. Here, too, considerable investment and work is needed to maximize the capabilities of the area.

Development of Retail and Wholesale Trade Potentials. Retail and wholesale trade activity is largely dependent on the over-all economy of the area. A strong economy generates much trade activity; a weak one manifests itself by declining or static trade activity. As the Southwest Georgia economy becomes stronger, growth will occur in retail and wholesale trade.

However, positive steps can be taken to improve the situation by campaigns to upgrade the present activity levels of area merchants, through education in modern selling techniques, training of employees, and promotional campaigns.

1825